

Your Right To Representation

You can have a representative, such as an attorney, help you when you do business with Social Security. We will work with your representative, just as we would with you.

For your protection, your representative cannot charge or collect a fee from you without first getting written approval from us. However, your representative may accept money from you in advance as long as it is held in a trust or escrow account.

Both you and your representative are responsible for providing us with accurate information. It is illegal to furnish false information knowingly and willfully. If you do, you may face criminal prosecution.

What a representative can do

Once you appoint a representative, he or she can act on your behalf in most Social Security matters by:

- Getting information from your Social Security file;
- Helping you get medical records or information to support your claim;
- Coming with you, or for you, to any interview, conference or hearing you have with us;
- Requesting a reconsideration, hearing or Appeals Council review; and
- Helping you and your witnesses prepare for a hearing and questioning any witnesses.

Your representative also will receive a copy of the decision(s) we make on your claim(s).

Choosing a representative

You can choose an attorney or other qualified person to represent you. You also can have more than one representative. However, you cannot have someone who has been suspended or disqualified from representing others before the Social Security Administration or who may not, by law, act as a representative.

Some organizations can help you find an attorney or give you free legal services if you qualify. Some representatives do not charge

unless you receive benefits. Your Social Security Office has a list of organizations that can help you find a representative.

You can appoint one or more people in a firm, corporation or other organization as your representative, but you **may not** appoint the firm, corporation or organization itself.

After you choose a representative, you must tell us **in writing** as soon as possible. To do this, get Form SSA-1696-U4, *Appointment of Representative*, from our website at www.socialsecurity.gov or from any Social Security office.

You must give the name of the person you are appointing and sign your name. If the person is **not** an attorney, he or she must give his or her name, in writing, state that he or she accepts the appointment, and sign the form.

What your representative may charge you

To charge you a fee for services, your representative first must file either a fee agreement or a fee petition with us.

Your representative **cannot** charge you more than the fee amount we approve. If you or your representative disagree with the fee we approve, either of you can ask us to look at it again.

A representative who charges or collects a fee without our approval, or charges or collects too much, may be suspended or disqualified from representing anyone before the Social Security Administration and also may face criminal prosecution.

Filing a fee agreement

If you and your representative have a written fee agreement, your representative may ask us to approve it any time before we decide your claim. Usually, we will approve the agreement and tell you in writing how much your representative may charge as long as:

- You both signed the agreement;
- Your claim was approved and resulted in past-due benefits; and

(over)

- The fee you agreed on is no more than 25 percent of past-due benefits or \$6,000, whichever is less.

If we do not approve the fee agreement, we will notify you and your representative in writing that your representative must file a fee petition.

Filing a fee petition

Your representative may give us a fee petition after completing the work on your claim(s). This written request should describe in detail the amount of time spent on each service your representative provided. Your representative must give you a copy of the fee petition and each attachment. If you disagree with the fee requested or the information shown, contact us within 20 days. We will consider the reasonable value of the representative's services and tell you, in writing, the amount of the fee we approve.

How much you pay

The amount of the fee we decide your representative may charge is the most you owe for his or her services even if you agreed to pay your representative more. However, your representative can charge you for out-of-pocket expenses, such as medical reports, without our approval.

If an attorney or non-attorney whom Social Security has found eligible for direct payment represents you, we usually withhold 25 percent (but never more) of your past-due benefits to pay toward the fee. We pay all or part of the representatives from this money and send you any money left over.

Sometimes you must pay your representative directly:

- You must pay the rest you owe if the amount of the approved fee is more than the amount of money we withheld and paid your representative for you.
- You must pay the entire fee amount if:
 - Your representative is not eligible for direct payment;
 - We did not withhold 25 percent from your past-due Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits, or both; or

- Your representative did make a timely request for a fee and we sent you the money which we should have withheld.

You must pay for out-of-pocket expenses your representative incurs or expect(s) to incur (for example, the cost of getting your doctor's or hospital records).

If someone else pays your representative

Even when someone else will pay the fee for you (for example, an insurance company), we must approve the fee unless:

- It is a nonprofit organization or federal, state, county or city agency that will pay the fee and any expenses from government funds; and
- Your representative gives us a written statement that you will not have to pay any fee or expenses.

If you appeal your claim to the federal court

The court can allow a reasonable fee for your attorney. The fee usually will not exceed 25 percent of all past-due benefits that result from the court's decision. Your attorney cannot charge any additional fee for services before the court.

Contacting Social Security

For more information, visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call toll-free **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call or TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.



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Important Notice About Representation

You may choose to have a representative help you. You may appoint an attorney or other person to act as your representative. Some representatives may represent you for free. We will work with this person just as we would work with you.

Most representatives do not charge a fee unless your claim is successful and you receive benefits. **Usually, your representative may not charge a fee unless we approve it.**

If you get a representative, you or that person must notify us in writing. You may use our Form SSA-1696-U4 Appointment of Representative. Any local Social Security office can give you this form.

If you want an attorney to help you, you may contact the organization(s) listed below. The organization you contact should give you the name and number of an attorney with experience representing people at Social Security hearings.

| Organizations | Address | Telephone |
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| PA Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service | | (717)238-6807 or (800)692-7375 |
| Berks County Bar Association | 544 Court Street P O Box 1058 Reading, PA 19601 | (610) 375-4591 |
| Blair County Bar Association | 423 Allegheny Street Hollidaysburg, PA 16648 | (814) 693-3090 |
| Cambria County Bar Association | P O Box 157 Johnstown, PA 15907 | (814) 255-3221 |
| Centre County Bar Association | 232 Match Factory Place Belleville, PA 16823 | (814) 231-0996 |
| Westmoreland County Bar Association | 129 North Pennsylvania Avenue Greensburg, PA 15601 | (724) 834-6730 |

If you cannot pay for legal representation and you think you might qualify for free legal help, you may contact the organization(s) listed below. If they cannot help you, they may refer you to someone else.

| Organization | Address | Telephone |
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| National Association of Disability Representatives | 1615 L Street NW, Suite 650 Internet Site: http://www.nadr.org Washington, DC 20036 | (800) 747-6131 |
| Nat'l Org of SSA Claimants Reps (NOSSCR) | 560 Sylvan Avenue Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 | (800) 431-2804 |
| Community Legal Services | 1424 Chestnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19102 | (215) 981-3700/3750/3800 |
| Community Legal Services | 3638 North Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19140 | (215) 227-2400 |
| Elderly Law Project | Temple University School of Law 1719 North Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19122 | (215) 204-6884 |
| Lancaster County Office of Aging | 50 North Duke Street Lancaster, PA 17603 | (717) 299-7979 |
| Laurel Legal Services, Inc. (Clarion) | 231 West Main Street Clarion, PA 16214 | (814)226-4340 or (800)660-1755 |
| Laurel Legal Services, Inc. (Greensburg) | 306 South Pennsylvania Avenue Greensburg, PA 15601 | (724)836-2211 or (800)253-9558 |
| Laurel Legal Services, Inc. (Indiana) | 655 Church Street Suite 1 Indiana, PA 15701 | (724)349-3440 or (800)660-1753 |
| Laurel Legal Services, Inc. (Johnstown) | 225-227 Franklin Street Suite 400 Johnstown, PA 15901 | (814)536-8917 or (888)244-7252 |
| Lawyer Reference Service | 100 West Airy Street Norristown, PA 19401 | (610) 279-9660 |
| Lawyer Referral Service | Lancaster Bar Association 20 East Orange Street Lancaster, PA 17602 | (717) 393-0737 |
| Lawyer Referral Service | 155 South 9th Street Easton, PA 18042 | (610) 258-6333 |
| Lawyer Referral Services of Lehigh County | 1114 Walnut Street Allentown, PA 18102 | (610) 433-7094 |
| Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | Montgomery County Division 248 King Street Pottstown, PA 19464 | (610) 326-8280/(877) 429-5994 |
| Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | Chester County Division 222 North Walnut Street, 2nd Floor West Chester, PA 19380 | (610) 436-4510/(877) 429-5994 |
| Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | Delaware County Division 410 Welsh Street Chester, PA 19013 | (610) 436-4510/(877) 429-5994 |
| Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | Montgomery County Division 625 Swede Street Norristown, PA 19401 | (610) 275-5400/(877)429-5994 |

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| Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | Bucks County Division, 1290 Veterans Hwy. P O Box 809 Bristol, PA 19007 | (215) 781-1111/(877) 429-5994 |
| Legal Aid of Southeastern PA | Bucks County Division 100 Union Street Doylestown, PA 18901 | (215) 340-1818/(877) 429-5994 |
| Legal Services of NE Pennsylvania | 729 Monroe Street Stroudsburg, PA 18360 | (717) 424-5338 |
| Lehigh Valley Legal Services | 22 South 3rd Street 2nd Floor Easton, PA 18042 | (610) 253-9305 |
| Lehigh Valley Legal Services | 65 East Elizabeth Avenue Suite 903 Bethlehem, PA 18108 | (610) 317-8757 |
| Mid-Penn Legal Services, Inc. (Altoona) | 205 Lakemont Park Boulevard Altoona, PA 16602 | (814)943-8139 or (800)326-9177 |
| Mid-Penn Legal Services, Inc. (Bedford) | 232 East Pitt Street Bedford, PA 15522 | (814)623-6189 or (800)326-9177 |
| Mid-Penn Legal Services, Inc. (Clearfield) | 211 East Locust Street Clearfield, PA 16830 | (814)765-9646 or (800)326-9177 |
| Mid-Penn Legal Services, Inc. (Lewistown) | 3 West Monument Street Suite 203 Lewistown, PA 17044 | (717)248-3099 or (800)326-9177 |
| Mid-Penn Legal Services, Inc. (St. College) | 3500 East College Avenue Suite 1295 State College, PA 16801 | (814)238-4958 or (800)326-9177 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Carbon County | 2 East Broad Street Suite 210 Hazleton, PA 18201 | (877) 515-7195 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Clinton County | 329 Market Street Williamsport, PA 17701 | (800) 326-7436 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Lackawanna County | 507 Linden Street Suite 300 Scranton, PA 18503 | (570)342-0184 or (800)982-4387 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Lycoming County | 329 Market Street Williamsport, PA 17701 | (800) 326-7436 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Monroe & Pike County | 10 North Tenth Street Stroudsburg, PA 18360 | (570)424-5338 or (800)532-8282 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Northum/Snyder/Union | 133 North 2nd Street Sunbury, PA 17801 | (877) 515-7730 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Susquehanna/Bradford | 213 Main Street Suite 1 Towanda, PA 18848 | (877) 515-7732 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Tioga County | 329 Market Street Williamsport, PA 17701 | (800) 326-7436 |
| North Penn Legal Services - Wayne County | Court Street Wayne County Courthouse Honesdale, PA 18431 | (877) 515-7465 |

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| North Penn Legal Services - Wyoming/Sullivan County | Rte. 29 South P O Box 703 Tunkhannock, PA 18657 | (877) 515-7738 |
| PA Lawyer Referral | PA Bar Center Harrisburg, PA 17101 | (800) 692-7375 |
| PA Lawyer Referral | P O Box 186 Harrisburg, PA 17201 | (717) 238-6715 |
| Penn Legal Assistance | 3701 Chestnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19104 | (800) 431-2804 |
| Philadelphia Bar Association | 1101 Market Street 11th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19107 | (215) 238-1701 |
| Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services, Inc. | 218 North Kimberly Avenue Suite 101 Somerset, PA 15501 | (814)443-4615 or (888)855-3873 |
| York Legal Referral | York County Bar Association York County Courthouse York, PA 17401 | (717) 854-8755 |
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If you want someone who is not an attorney to help you, you may contact the organization(s) listed below. The organization you contact should give you the name and number of someone with experience representing people at Social Security hearings.

| Organization | Address | Telephone |
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